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# Introduction – English as a Lingua Franca and Interculturality: Beyond Orthodoxies<sup>1</sup>

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## ELF and Interculturality: Two Different Fields that Have Much in Common

When we started working on this book project, we envisaged a publication about the links between the use of lingua francas and interculturality in our post-national and ‘glocal’ (both global and local) worlds that would, in a sense, follow up on Byram’s (2008) idea that language – including lingua franca language – is somehow detached from culture and contexts of interaction. As the project advanced, however, we attracted very few contributions that dealt with lingua francas other than English. Although the world is ‘full’ of lingua francas used within and across national and many other types of borders, English as a lingua franca (ELF) as a field of research has attracted a lot of attention worldwide (Bowles & Cogo, 2015 ; Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011; Mauranen & Ranta, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2011). We therefore decided to concentrate on ELF, hoping that the discussions provoked by the chapters in this book might also trigger debates in relation to other lingua francas such as Arabic, Chinese Mandarin, Spanish and French, but also Esperanto – or any other language, for that matter, as all can serve as lingua francas today. The need for these languages to be examined is dire (Dervin, 2010). Interculturality is not exclusive to English. Thus, just as O’Regan in his commentary chapter at the end of our book aims to ‘open a new reading’ of the term ‘ELF’, we too aim to open up discussion of the cultural and intercultural in lingua franca communication.

It is of course obvious that English is today’s lingua franca *par excellence*, with 375 million people speaking it as their first language and one in four of the world’s population speaking it as a second/foreign language (Crystal, 2012). Although many aspects of the use of ELF have been researched, interculturality seems to have been neglected, or at least discussions on interculturality in relation to ELF do not appear to be in line with current perspectives on and understandings of the term in fields such as language education, applied linguistics, inter-/multicultural education and intercultural communication. For example, earlier attempts to examine lingua francas have tended to focus more on the linguistic, syntactic, phonological and pragmatic elements of a language, as well as intelligibility and other sociolinguistic features (see for example McGroarty, 2006, in the special issue of *The Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*; although the work of Canagarajah (2006) in that special issue begins to assert the need to address historical associations of lingua francas, discussions are largely framed within applied linguistics theoretical approaches). Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey appear to make a move into the field of interculturality when they discuss how ELF talk is used for a range of purposes ‘including the projection of cultural identity, the promotion of solidarity, the sharing of humor’ (2011: 296) or when Jenkins examines the position of English as a lingua franca in the international university (2014). More recent work on metrolingualism by Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) challenges common frameworks of language by investigating contemporary urban language practices that accommodate both fixity and fluidity in understanding language use, albeit more in the realm of plurilinguism than lingua franca use.

In this volume, our aim is to attempt to link for the first time research on ELF and ‘renewed’ interculturality as put forward by e.g. Dervin, 2012; Dervin & Risager, 2014; Holliday, 2010, 2013; Holmes, 2014, 2015; Machart *et al.*, 2013; Piller, 2011 and their predecessors such as Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986 and Sarangi, 1994. All of these scholars represent a coherent understanding of interculturality, as we also present in this introduction. As intercultural communication and education scholars, we believe that any exploration of languages – including lingua francas – in intercultural communication must explore and seek to understand, both interpretively and critically, how language – and its problematic associated term ‘culture’ – are constructed and reconstructed, negotiated and renegotiated through communication in intercultural encounters. We are interested in exploring how languages are shaped and constructed in interactions and intercultural encounters as well as how the (inter)subjectivities of individuals’ multiple realities and identities inevitably influence how and why people engage with one another, and their understandings of those encounters. Using and understanding language in communication thus goes beyond static, reified, normative and discrete forms of language and interaction to account for individuals’ (inter)subjectivities, which in turn are influenced by history, geography, languages, culture, religion, multiple identities, social class, economics, power, belonging, etc. Reference to this aspect of research on interculturality is often absent from studies of ELF.

We are also interested in how historical, political, economic and organisational structures can assert and/or require preference for one language, or language form, over others. Some examples, in the case of English, would be cultivating a ‘correct’ English accent, understanding the norms of communication in and through English and knowing the cultures of English-speaking countries – in other words, understanding the reified, structuralist, idealised, unauthentic and unrealistic meanings of communication in Englishes and in languages more generally. Many of these notions of ‘good’ or ‘correct’ English are perpetuated by state and private language regimes such as language schools (Henry in his chapter discusses the proliferation of Global Oriental English schools in China); language testing systems such as IELTS that require a certain level of English for study in English-language universities or schools; opportunities for study abroad to acquire ‘native-like’ proficiency (again, usually determined by economic status); state and regional educational policies (e.g. the Common European Framework of Reference which delineates ‘levels’ of competent language knowledge and use); and examination systems that favour grammatical proficiency and linguistic knowledge (e.g. College English – CET 4 – which all university students in China must pass to obtain an undergraduate degree). These historical and pragmatic features of English language learning are captured perfectly in Tawona Sithole’s (2014) poem ‘Good English’. Although good at English at school, and although told by all who heard him speak English that ‘you have such good English’, Sithole’s choices in life were pre-ordained, prescribed, and pre-judged according to the linguistic features of his language use; structures of class, race and economics; his place of birth and country in which he was educated (Zimbabwe). In short, the intercultural aspects of his English-language identity and communication in English appear to inscribe a fixed identity. It is these much more nuanced and situated aspects of lingua franca communication that the authors explore herein.

To this end, we have put together chapters that seek to invoke and provoke further discussion and research on the complex, multitudinous and multifarious forms of languages more generally, and Englishes in particular – pigeons, creoles, ‘Chinglishes’, regional, colonial and popular forms – the innumerable Englishes that people have used and are using around the world in their daily encounters. In doing so, we open up the possibility of thinking about Englishes as lingua francas, as they are shaped by both the interculturality that speakers bring to the encounter and the

sociocultural-economic-historical (etc.) aspects of the context of the interaction, and not in some 'hypostatized' form which, as O'Regan argues in his chapter, has emerged in recent thinking about ELF.

The literature on ELF that has attempted to tackle issues of intercultural communication tends to remain at a basic level, e.g. at the simplistic and uncritical levels of 'cultural difference', 'tolerance' and 'respect for other(s)' (cultures)' (see Ya-Chen Su, 2014). Moreover, the lack of interdisciplinary and multilingual discussions on these issues requires attention – a task that most interculturalists feel is necessary when working on, for example, identity, community, culture, etc. as these concepts have been imported from anthropology, cultural studies and sociology, among others. An overemphasis on pragmatic competence (House, 2010; Murray, 2012) in the field of ELF as a marker of interculturality illustrates these problematic issues. Exceptions are increasing; many of the authors in this volume have already taken steps to relate both fields (e.g. Baker, 2012, 2015; Dervin, 2013; Fay, Lytra & Ntavalagiakou, 2010; see also Gu, Patkin & Kirkpatrick, 2014).

Indeed, during the development of this book, research on both ELF and the intercultural have been the scenes of internal and external debates, particularly around orthodoxies. For example, O'Regan (formerly a co-editor of the influential intercultural journal *Language and Intercultural Communication*) published in 2014 a Marxist critique of how ELF is being conceptualised, which led key figures from the field to react and attack him for misinterpreting ELF and even for not representing 'outstanding scholarship' (Baker, Jenkins & Baird, 2015; Widdowson). In putting this volume together, we too received similar comments when we approached some ELF scholars for cooperation, and we also lost a few authors who chose to remain 'faithful' to their ELF 'territory' (Becher & Trowler, 2001). However, our aim here is not to create a polemic, or to nurture or perpetuate spurious disciplinary boundaries, but rather to explore and build interdisciplinary understandings about interculturality and lingua francas, including ELF, and to initiate a research agenda. In our book proposal some three years ago we noted that ELF is a new field of research that accounts for an empirically based and theoretically informed understanding of how English is used today in an increasing number of contexts. However, O'Regan reminds us that this kind of lingua franca communication, even some 500 years ago, was characterised by culturally – and interculturally – nuanced features. Dervin also remarked that lingua francas 'have always existed and have enabled interaction and communication, business negotiation, agreement, debate, love and hate' (2011: 3, our translation from French). Acknowledging O'Regan's invitation in his final commentary chapter, we would like to open up exploration of the notion of lingua francas more generally, in order to look for and invite 'a new reading'.

We note that current trends in research on ELF appear to be different to those in the field of interculturality. Whereas the latter is represented by different lines of thought, both theoretically and methodologically, ELF scholars appear to share understandings about the definition of the concept and ways of analysing ELF interaction. By contrast, both outside of ELF and in the field of intercultural communication, many scholars still wonder about who is included and excluded from the label 'ELF' and what constitutes a context of ELF interaction. For example, a recent definition of ELF, which now includes 'native speakers of English' who were initially excluded from ELF communication, specifies 'any use of English among speakers of different first languages [including English] for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option' (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7).

Since the notions of 'native speakers' and 'mother tongues' have been abandoned because of their Eurocentric and essentialist characteristics which tend to remove individuals' agency, one

must ask if the label 'ELF' is still viable. (For example, O'Regan in this volume prefers 'lingua franca Englishes'.) Considering that speaking a language is always influenced by our identity markers – the ones we (wish to) project, and the ones that are imposed on us – gender, social class, status in society, regional origins that mark out accents, dialects, discourses, etc. – then are not all situations of interaction in English ELF? Again, we must ask who has the right to decide, and for whom. Who among the interlocutors is able to defend his or her status as a 'native' or 'non-native' speaker?

Skin colour, for example, can easily lead to people being classified as ELF speakers. In the "I, too, am Oxford" project, through which students of colour demanded a discussion on race to be taken seriously at Oxford University, many participants complained about the fact that their skin colour often led people to tell them, for example, 'Wow your English is great', even though most of them were born in England. For the anthropologist Marc Augé, people who share a same language do not always 'speak' the same language and do not always understand each other. He adds: 'A volatile and mobile, fluid and invisible, frontier can separate those who seem near and unite those whose language and culture seem to separate' (2010: 17, our translation).

All these questions could resemble the questions of 'Who is normal? Who is not?'. Moreover, as Lemke (2010: 20) asserts: 'Normality is always a mystification of normativity, a social lie that succeeds in part by introducing simplistic, low-dimensional category grids for pigeon-holing us, and in part by sanctioning any too public display of mismatched qualities'. This is one of the most important messages of the form of 'renewed' interculturality that is suggested in this volume: Not only power relations, identity and agency but also work on representations should be the most important elements in discussing these issues. The over-emphasis on 'cultural difference' and (national?) 'culture' in the 'intercultural', as discussed below, is increasingly becoming a thing of the past.

But similar questions might be asked about the intercultural. Who is considered intercultural? Who decides? Isn't 'intercultural' a viewpoint? For example, two friends from different countries who use ELF to speak with each other may not consider what they do as ELF. Is it appropriate that we, as researchers, straitjacket them into this label? What impact can such labeling have on the kind of interculturality they 'do' in front of us if we start from this premise? And what about our readers? How do they perceive these two individuals in our accounts of their relations?

Next, we discuss current critical perspectives on interculturality and how these can help us to reflect on the relationship between interculturality and the notion of ELF.

### **Making sense of interculturality**

The concept of interculturality is a complex one which has been defined and understood in many different ways. Because of its complexity, it can easily be used as an intellectual simplifier or a simplistic slogan, which contributes to pinning down and labelling. The fact that it is used, overused, and sometimes abused by decision makers does not help. Many approaches to interculturality rely on a deficit framework in which someone needs to learn to think and behave like the other in order to interact with her. The contested ideas of misunderstanding and non-understanding often lie behind certain conceptions of interculturality (Dervin, Layne & Trémion, 2015).

The notion itself contains the old, tired and biased term 'culture', which many fields of research have begun to problematise and even discard. Culture has always been part of the intercultural orthodoxy, but in order to make sense of the intercultural in relation to ELF we propose to review the problems the concept poses – and, potentially, to get rid of it. We ask: What does the concept refer to? Is this still a valid concept for such complex worlds as ours? Does it refer to the

global, the national, the regional, the local? Does it include references to gender, social class, power, language, religion, etc.? Is it possible to determine the boundaries between cultures when cultures exist because they have been interacting with other cultures (or rather, because people have interacted with people across borders)? For Moghaddam (2011: 19): 'There is no such thing as a coherent western or Islamic civilisation that could/would clash. Civilisations are not tectonic plates that move against each other'. We thus need to be careful not to put people into 'little boxes of disparate civilisations' (Sen, 2005: 4), or to reify culture. So when we speak of ELF, we must ask: What are the interlocutors' cultures that should/could be borne in mind? And what are the implications when we do so? (See for example the chapters by Baker, Henry, O'Regan and Räisänen in this volume.)

Our first argument is that culture is not a *thing* but a *concept*. Adichie (2014: 127) reminds us, 'Culture does not make people. People make culture'. In the following excerpt, found randomly on the internet and reprinted verbatim, the fear of the other's culture – rather than fear of the Other as such – is clearly expressed:

I'm in China and one friend invited me to visit her house. If I bring some pears as a gift into her house, she and her family would get embarrassed and I'd wonder what's wrong. It's the cultural misunderstanding. I know pears has the meaning "goodbyes" in China, but not in Korea. If you're in Korea, you would be surprised at the fact that Korean people split pears when they eat it. Korean pears are really big, you can never eat one pear all yourself. (<http://www.italki.com/question/40081?answer-sorting=1>)

This sort of fear of 'cultural misunderstanding' is common and has been highly 'commodified' since the late 1930s (Dahlen, 1997: 174). The problem with the above assertions is that the individual expects the Chinese family to behave in a certain way, not to be flexible and to be thus guided/commanded by their culture, as if it were their destiny, as if they were helpless. We thus agree with Sen:

Even though certain basic cultural attitudes and beliefs may influence the nature of our reasoning, they cannot invariably determine it fully. There are various influences on our reasoning, and we need not lose our ability to consider other ways of reasoning just because we identify with, and have been influenced by membership in a particular group. Influence is not the same thing as complete determination, and choices do remain despite the existence—and importance—of cultural influences. (2006: 34–35)

For Holliday (2010: 4) there is danger in adopting a 'destiny' approach to culture. He calls this danger 'essentialism' and defines it as an approach that 'presets people's individual behaviour as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are'. Of course such discourses of culture are very practical, as they give us the impression that we can explain everything. Yet in many cases culture is used as a dangerous proxy for something else. Prashad (2001: xi), for example, explains that culture can easily be used to camouflage discourses of race – which are taboo in many parts of the world. So instead of uttering racially incorrect discourses, by means of culture one can turn such discourses into acceptable discourses about interculturality, cultural difference, norms, etc. Also in this introduction, Prashad observes that discourses of culture can also contribute to placing ourselves on pedestals, leading us to pathologise and consider

the Other as less civilised, modern and cosmopolitan, even if these discourses can be accompanied, contradictorily, by discourses of tolerance and respect.

Our second argument relates to the definition of the Other. Again, this is a very unstable category. Pieterse (2007: 139) argues that 'the Other is no longer a stable or even meaningful category'. People may share a current nationality, place of birth, a language, a religion, a profession or a neighbourhood and still be very different from one another. Breidenbach and Nyiri problematise for example the current homogenising discourses on Muslims:

If for instance a journalist tries to convince you that the 200 lashes of the whip to which a twenty-year old rape victim was sentenced in Saudi Arabia in 2007 has to do with 'Muslim culture', ask yourself how likely it is that [Muslim] men and women, grandparents and teenagers, workers, lawyers, writers, residents of Mecca, Tangiers, Cologne, and Detroit all share the same values and will behave alike in similar situations. (2009: 343)

Our world is obsessed with difference, especially difference across – and rarely within – in relation to interculturality and imagines fictions such as the East versus the West, speakers of French versus speakers of English, Us and Them (Laplantine, 2012), which establish purist/homogenising boundaries between outsiders/insiders, as well as between 'Our' culture and 'Their' culture. In the current glocal era, this obsession is highly questionable. Kureishi (2011), for example, explains that defining British culture as a list of distinctively English cultural elements such as Derby Day, Henley regatta, or Wensleydale cheese – as marketers of cultures want us to believe – ignores the global *mélange* which has made 'yoga exercise, going to Indian restaurants, the music of Bob Marley, the Hare Krishna temple as well as the films of Sylvester Stallone, therapy, hamburgers, visits to gay bars, the dole offices and the taking of drugs' (56) into essential characteristics of Britishness.

This pervasive bias of cultural difference – without considering similarities among people – tends to be the entry point into interculturality in ELF research, as it is also in some 'intercultural' research. People might share similar values, opinions, interests and so forth across borders; for their part, researchers must investigate these elements and what they do to ELF interaction. The following example, taken from the British television comedy series *Mind Your Language* (1977) offers an interesting example. The show, which was set in an adult education college in London in the 1970s, focuses on a class of English as a Foreign Language. All the students are from different parts of the world and have to use ELF throughout the programme. In one of the episodes, a new student (Speaker 4 in Excerpt 1), who does not speak English, is trying to interact with the other 'foreign' students. An Italian student (Speaker 3) starts a conversation with the new student by using words he assumes he knows and which are related to football:

#### **Excerpt 1**

**1:** Hey, you not speak nothing?

**2:** He is not knowing the English as well as what we are knowing

**3:** I speak with him

**1:** Blimey, he speak Hungryarian

**3:** Sure I speak Hunarian... Football

- 4: Football
- 3: Puskas
- 4: Pele
- 3: Kepkens
- 4: Beckenball
- 3: Bobby Lee Shutkan
- 4: Bobby Lee Moor
- 3: You see I told you I speak the language. (Series 2, Episode 2: 'All present if not correct')

Although these students do not have a language in common, their references to football and the names of famous international players allow them to enter into a dialogue, which is limited of course, but could be the first step towards friendship.

As a first step toward joining forces with the intercultural, ELF research should problematise and potentially rupture the cultural cul-de-sac. ELF users do not meet cultures, but complex subjects who 'do' identity and culture with each other. (The chapters of Räisänen, Henry and Jenks, for example, are illustrative of this move.)

### **Identity and interculturality as a way out?**

Work on interculturality now requires reversing the usual direction of thought, which has been 'polluted' by essentialist and culturalist approaches to self and other. Like Wimmer (2013: 3), we must find a middle ground between the Charybis of essentialism described above and the counter-reactive Scylla of hyperconstructivism. In what follows, we make some suggestions for research on ELF.

As previously asserted, it is important for researchers and practitioners of ELF to work from a diverse diversities approach (Dervin, 2008), i.e. an approach that attempts to 'complexify' the way one observes, problematises and analyses ELF interaction. The concept of intersectionality, an analytic framework that allows the interrelating of dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, status, disabilities, language, sexuality, etc., is a fruitful path to diverse diversities. If, when working on interculturality, ELF encounters are considered from the perspective of national culture only, then many identity markers that could help us to understand certain phenomena not only might be ignored but also might be detrimental to research participants. On the contrary, if researchers complexify their analyses by such a process, they may be able to empower their participants to exit the minuscule and biased box of culture that is imposed on them. Some of the chapters in this volume attempt to challenge this position. For example, the Finnish engineers in Räisänen's study realised the limitations of calling upon a so-called Finnish linguistic identity to assert themselves as reasonably competent speakers of English in the face of their German English-speaking counterparts whom they had initially considered as worse speakers of English than they themselves. In other words, such categories were not helpful. By contrast, Kaur found no trace of national culture-based misunderstanding in the interactions of her international students in a Malaysian university; instead, she found misunderstanding that might also be found in 'intracultural' communication.

Other aspects of identity and interculturality that could enrich research on ELF are presented here. The following dimensions are in interaction with one another: discrimination, inequalities, power relations and social justice. Too often, whether in language education or



analysis of intercultural encounters, researchers have refrained from entering the muddy terrain of politics (with either a small or capital 'p'). It is important to examine, though ELF interactions, how (for example) power relations connected to discourses of culture are expressed, co-constructed and enacted, as well as how hierarchies are created and what their consequences are for people. Such examinations should help researchers to complexify their studies and also help practitioners and ELF speakers themselves to feel empowered and also to note instances of inequality (for example) and to act upon them. It should not be denied that ELF does contribute to unbalanced power relations; thus, educators, researchers and decision makers have a duty to help ELF users defuse such situations and to provide them with the tools to do so. Intercultural pedagogies, for instance, should encourage ELF users to take action and to be ethical/responsible communicators.

We conclude by discussing the position of the researcher in examining interculturality in ELF contexts. Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012) note that a lot of research contributes to othering research participants. As subjective beings, researchers cannot pretend to be absent or invisible from their field. They have an impact not only upon interaction but also upon their participants who are 'doing' identity and culture. Therefore, as Krumer-Nevo and Sidi observe, it is important for researchers to try to avoid the following in the research process: i) objectification (turning the participant into an object of research rather than recognising the participant as an agent of discourse and actions); ii) decontextualisation (ignoring the micro- and macro-contexts of interaction, research and identity); iii) dehistorisation (emphasising the present and ignoring the past); and iv) deauthorisation (imagining the subjective subtext of what participants claim to be objective about). All of these tasks require honesty, ethicality and reflexivity from researchers.

Further, researchers need to acknowledge and harness their own linguistic resources as well as those of their participants when undertaking their research; additionally, they should challenge the ideologies of the linguistic regimes embedded in the research site, including assumptions about the role of English (as a lingua franca) (Holmes, Fay, Andrews & Attia, 2013).

Before moving to the contributions of this volume to these discussions and to linking up ELF and the 'intercultural', we review the main points made hitherto. Within the ELF scholarship, research on interculturality seems to lag behind work in the intercultural communication field; moreover, the way the notion of interculturality is used does not always match the discussions in the latter field. These discussions put into question certain orthodoxies that are deemed to be counterproductive and of the past (uncritical use of the concept of culture, obsession with cultural difference, the straitjacketing of individuals, etc.). We therefore maintain that research and practice of Englishes as lingua francas would benefit from a perspective that examines how users of these forms of English construct, reconstruct, negotiate and renegotiate culture, methodological nationalism or geographicality (e.g. East vs. West), their identities, the context of interaction, power relations and so forth in intercultural encounters.

### **The interconnections and inter-relationships between interculturality and ELF**

The key objectives of this edited collection are to investigate the interconnections and inter-relationships among the broader concept of interculturality (and its related elements or dimensions of language, culture, identity, etc.) and English as a lingua franca, and to consider the possible pedagogical implications of such investigation. The chapters explore these relationships in a range of

different ways by i) discussing how interculturality can be understood, theorised, constructed and researched in ELF contexts and within the domain of ELF more generally; ii) exploring how the notions and concepts of not only 'interculturality'/'the intercultural' and 'culture' but also 'identity' and 'intersection' are discussed and understood in relation to ELF-oriented learning and teaching; and iii) investigating the intercultural implications (ideological, political, religious, historical, etc.) and modes of ELF pedagogies.

These aims are addressed by several authors through empirical investigations in various contexts (ELF interactions in interpersonal and inter-/intracultural communication and negotiation, educational settings, etc.), and through examinations of how far existing theoretical approaches in the fields of intercultural communication, applied linguistics and language/intercultural education can be productively applied to such investigations. Through conceptual analyses and empirical research, the chapters offer implications for new directions in ELF research – theories, methodologies, and pedagogy – thus illustrating a diversity of approaches and understandings within the field of ELF. We deal with each of these domains, follow with a summary of chapters and finish by suggesting an agenda for research into lingua franca communication as well as the cultural and intercultural in these encounters.

### **Theoretical standpoints**

This collection increases awareness of a number of emergent theoretical standpoints or positionings for scholars to consider when researching the intercultural dimensions of ELF. As previously discussed, the first standpoint concerns the treatment of the omnipresence of the term 'culture'. Most authors problematise the term and highlight its socially constructed nature, specifically how it is (re)constructed through communication in multilingual and plurilingual contexts. Risager, in the introductory chapter, claims that no language is culturally neutral – including English used as a lingua franca. All languages, even when functioning as lingua francas, (re)produce culture in the sense of meaning in human society through complex language-related cultural flows via people over time, which she calls 'linguacultural' and 'discursive' flows. Baker notes that culture is not congruent with nations or ethnic groups, but instead should be considered a resource for constructing flexible and hybridised forms of identity. For Henry, culture is understood not as a fixed set of attributes, but as a larger sociocultural-political context that allows interactants to bring into being 'intracultural imaginings' of who they are. O'Regan, who questions its usefulness and even its as a concept, notes how it is situational and dependent upon the contexts in which concrete interactions occur.

The empirical studies by Jenks, Borge and Kaur all highlight the deficiencies of a differentialist paradigm of culture (i.e. of misunderstanding and miscommunication based on cultural difference) in understanding ELF encounters. As they view the matter, culture – and, by implication, the corollary term 'national identity' – become relevant only when they are talked into existence, for example in the context of food preparation, or in academic interactions between student and supervisor (as in Jenks' study). Bjørge points to the need to recognise the cultural hybridity at play in ELF interactions, argues that social constructionist approaches may shine brighter light on the nature of this hybridity and draws on Bhabha's 'third space' (1994) as a potentially useful locus at which to explore such interactions.

A second theoretical focus concerns the notion of identity. The chapters, both directly and indirectly, allude to a range of ways in which interlocutors express, negotiate and enact identity through ELF. Henry introduces the term 'indexicality'; that is, how interlocutors index their

communication and identity in intracultural interactions to demonstrate membership in a class of globally competent Chinese citizens as signified through English fluency. As first-language Chinese speakers, they index their use of English to enact a particular identity (or 'intracultural imaginings' as Henry puts it), such as, for example, bringing into being modern or cosmopolitan identities. Henry argues that in intracultural interactions of this nature, questions of indexicality can illuminate undercurrents of power, inequality, or ideology among the speakers using that lingua franca. He draws on Holliday's (2010) view that cultural description is never a neutral practice, but rather is one bound up in political discourses from which individuals negotiate the meanings and boundaries of self and other in society.

To some extent, without making this explicit, Räisänen alludes to this indexicality – of linking English-speaking ability to Finnish culture and education. Her Finnish engineers draw on a discourse of Finnishness to (re)construct understandings of their own identity, positionality and power as Finnish speakers of business English with German and other colleagues in their workplace in Germany. How they define themselves (and others) as speakers of English is indexed to being Finnish and to having studied English as a foreign language in Finland, including the high status attributed to such education internationally. Citing Piller, Räisänen reminds us that access to discourses is unequal among different individuals and that this inequality of access inherently characterises intercultural communication, which is 'typically between people who have starkly different *material, economic, social and cultural resources* at their disposal' (Piller, 2011: 173, italics in original).

The final chapter, by O'Regan, draws on critical theory to challenge the legitimacy of ELF as a 'new' field of study and on Marxism to highlight the limits of its reach. First, drawing on Spivak (1976), O'Regan places the term 'ELF' under erasure in order to question its legitimacy in the complex sociolinguistic terrain of the global and local uses of English. By crossing out the term (i.e., using a strikethrough to 'delete' it), he alludes to Derrida's (1976, p.19) understanding of the inadequacy of a concept – 'that ill-named thing' – as inadequate in that it has taken on 'an hypostatized form – reified, settled, resolved, fixed, sedimented, cemented and finally stamped onto the page: an inked sign in a white landscape' (see O'Regan, Chapter Nine, p. #). He is also critical of more recent ELF research that positions ELF as a new field. By tracing the development of the use of Englishes for communication, O'Regan shows that from the time of the voyages of discovery, beginning around the 1600s, Englishes were being developed and shaped by their use as a common form of communication – hence the emergences of his preferred term, 'lingua franca Englishes'. Second, taking a Marxist theoretical stance, he argues that ELF focuses on certain groups, such as global elites that are involved in international business and education, research and tourism/leisure even as they ignore the poor, the disenfranchised, the ethnically marginalised and the exploited. O'Regan reminds us that people, throughout the world and throughout history, have been 'accommodating and cooperating in the marginalisation, oppression and annihilation of one another' using (Englishes as) a lingua franca in (citing Phipps, 2007) 'the human struggle to make meaning'. In her chapter, Risager too notes that ELF research could widen its empirical basis to address all groups.

## **Methodologies**

The chapters present a range of methodologies for exploring ELF interactions. All of them indicate the importance of understanding the macro- and microcontextual features of an interaction as well as how those features influence forms of talk and identity construction. Where ethnographic

approaches are not central, researchers acknowledge how culture and context, and at times even a certain idea of national identity (e.g. Jenks, Räisänen) can influence ELF communication.

Henry applies an ethnographic approach to observe classes taught by multiple teachers in China and takes note of teacher-student interactions, pedagogy, methods, textbooks, technology and other teaching materials. He interviewed English language teachers (both foreign and Chinese), students, parents and school administrators to ascertain their understandings of English, the role it plays in Chinese society and their own relationship to it. From the linguistic choices of Chinese ELF users and the meanings they ascribe to those choices, he accessed their intentions and interpretations in order to illustrate the discursive production of identity.

Räisänen adopts a discursive approach to understand ELF users' identity construction. She argues that such an approach is necessary for exploring the cultural and intercultural aspects of language use because it is often by going beneath the surface that researchers can witness the kind of reality participants construct, reject, embrace and reconstruct, i.e. the layers of hidden discourses (Dervin, 2011). By uncovering these discourses, Räisänen states, the researcher can 'trace the ways in which individuals construct identities in relation to intercultural encounters and their linguistic and discursive choices when talking about their experiences' (p. #). Her own subjective engagement in the field (as a former doctoral researcher) facilitated a fine-grained understanding and analysis of her participants' (Finnish engineering students on work placement in Germany) intercultural ELF interactions.

Jenks and Bjørge also adopt a corpus-based discourse analysis approach: Jenks to understand how international students in the United Kingdom talk into being national identity and culture around food, and Bjørge to explore her students' uses of mitigated and unmitigated disagreement strategies in business negotiations using ELF. Kaur uses conversational analysis to analyse her data derived from participant observation of student classroom and conversational events, as well as interviews with teachers, students, and administrators. Kaur believes that for culture or nationality to be made relevant or acknowledged in any analysis, participants must be seen as attending to such elements in their talk. Analysing participants' conversations in context therefore prevents the researcher from applying any preconceived notions of a causal relationship between misunderstanding and cultural difference to the data.

## **Contexts**

Most of the studies described in the chapters orient their discussion to a particular macro- and microcontext which makes interculturality salient. Risager shows how Danish – like most languages – operates as a lingua franca in communities worldwide, through the flow of (Danish) immigrants as they construct new diaspora/communities; thus, Danish becomes both a lingua franca and an international language. Similarly, other languages, through the global linguistic flows enacted by people, also operate as lingua francas. Fay, Sifakis and Lytra's study discusses contemporary debates around English language education – and the viability of ELF – in the context of contemporary Greek society under reconstruction in the face of linguistic flows resulting from economic, refugee and asylum immigration. Traditional understandings of English and the native speaker model are being challenged by the hybridised forms of English in the new Greek landscape that is linguistically and politically fractured. For teachers, this situation raises questions about what English to teach and what pedagogy to use. Baker draws on the communication in English between two speakers – one Thai and the other French – in a café in Bangkok as they discuss their cultural understandings of the game of pétanque. He uses this ELF scenario to highlight the multifarious

nature of intercultural communication and the situated, emergent relationship between language and culture.

Jenks, Bjørge, Kaur and Räisänen focus on international students' ELF experiences. Jenks locates his research in the kitchen of a hall of residence at a university in the United Kingdom to analyse how postgraduate international students invoke personal understandings of their own and others' nationhood and identity as they discuss aspects of their lives such as doctoral supervision, food preparation food cultures. Bjørge analyses the interactions of 118 international master's-level students, from 28 countries, who are studying business English in a Danish university. By investigating how they deal with mitigated and unmitigated disagreement in negotiations through a shared language learning exercise, she shows that nation-based, cultural traditions may not be automatically transferable to an ELF context in which cultural hybridity may come into play. In Kaur's study, which is situated in a university in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, she investigated the naturally occurring spoken interaction (discussion of group assignments and casual conversations) in ELF outside the classroom among graduate students from 15 different linguistic backgrounds. Finally, Räisänen draws on her lived experience in a student hall of residence in Germany with Finnish engineering students on work placement to gain an insider's perspective of the communicative situations they encountered with German, Greek, Chinese and Indian students living in the same hall of residence as well as with work colleagues, who were mostly of German or Portuguese origin. The ELF interactions of these research subjects were both intercultural and potentially plurilingual.

Henry's study, which is divergent from the others but still complementary, focuses on intracultural communication among Chinese speakers of English. Henry drew on his teaching and research experience in educational institutions in Shenyang, where his subjects at two universities, one middle school, two elementary schools, three private adult language education centres and eight private children's schools show how Chinese L1 speakers use ELF to index their status and power. Like Henry, Fay *et al.* in the contemporary Greek context point to the need for an intercultural stance open to the international and intranational English-medium needs of, and possibilities for, speakers of English in and from Greece.

O'Regan, by contrast, provides an historical context by reminding readers that the concept ELF has been erroneously constructed – invented almost – as a late-20th-century phenomenon. He contextualises this discussion through examples of writings that show the use and development of Englishes dating from the 1600s and the time of the voyages of discovery, when Englishes developed and spread through trade and pirateering. Fay *et al.* also review the various types of Englishes that have been the focus of English language teaching since the mid-20th century in the 'Taking stock' section of their chapter.

The contexts foregrounded in these chapters show how Englishes, when used as lingua francas by speakers of Englishes and other languages, are shaped and constructed by multiple contexts; these include the historical, geographical, political, economic, cultural, religious, educational, gender, social location, class, etc. as well as the dispositions of the speakers themselves. In fact, according to Hall (2013), in a plurilithic view of languages, how individuals learn and use languages is determined by individuals' local experiences and the extent to which they adopt the social practices around them, rather than to some abstracted, monolithic and imposed supranational variety of experience. In summary, the chapters illustrate how context is central to not only how languages develop and flow, but also how culture, communication and (power) relations invoke meaning in ELF interactions.

## The pedagogical implications of ELF

The studies in our collection point to some key features that are not specific to ELF but may overlap with language and intercultural pedagogies more generally. Risager suggests a pedagogy that encompasses multiple languages as lingua francas. This pedagogy involves the decentring of 'target-language countries' (in the traditional and narrow national language paradigm of language teaching) in order to focus on the 'interrelationships [of language(s) and culture(s)] with other countries in a global historical perspective' (p. #). Baker, too, critiques the Anglocentric positioning of much ELT and argues for a dynamic and fluid approach that recognises the multifarious nature of intercultural communication, particularly in ELF scenarios, as well as the situated, emergent relationship between language and culture.

Risager reminds us that language pedagogy, including any lingua franca pedagogy, should consider the broader goal of developing learners' understandings of global citizenship and their critical awareness of cultural and linguistic complexity. Baker suggests a pedagogy that acknowledges the inherent variety of communicative practices and cultural characterisations embodied in ELF communication, the variety in teachers' experiences (in terms of teacher training) and the needs of different learners according to their learning contexts. He thus emphasises the importance of teaching about intercultural awareness (skills, knowledge and attitudes).

Bjørge's study shows that international students do not necessarily call upon cultural references or cultural identity in their handling of unmitigated disagreements in business negotiations. Her findings point to the dangers of business communication textbooks that rely on national cultural differences as a basis for business English lingua franca (BELF) communication. Similarly, Kaur's study highlights the need to avoid a differentialist approach in teaching about culture and instead to focus on intracultural similarities and differences.

Despite the pedagogic implications of the studies in this volume, O'Regan reminds researchers and teachers that preoccupation with native-speaker models are 'aggressively promoted' by governments and examinations systems in universities and schools, and within international testing systems such as IELTS, TOEIC and TOEFL. He also notes that in some cases, the native-speaker model appears to be the preferred model of parents who believe their children, in acquiring native-speaker English, will then have access to the capitalist world of global elites (the world upon which, as previously mentioned, current empirical ELF research is focused). This situation calls into question, for language learners, not only the status but also the linguistic and even economic potentials of learning a non-native-speaker form of English.

Fay *et al.* exemplify this contention in their analysis of English language education in contemporary Greece. Through their analysis of Greek educational documents, they identify possibilities and obstacles in developing interculturality in English language education, e.g. developing both learners' language awareness towards the multiplicity of Englishes available and their generic cultural awareness through intercultural skills development (rather than the mastery of 'cultural' topics). To this end, Fay *et al.* propose a pedagogy they call MATE (multicultural awareness through English), which is intranational and multicultural in character as well as alert to the increasing diversity evident within many schools and within Greece itself. Such a pedagogy acknowledges English as a significant language of communication in diverse societies and among non-native speakers of English (both in the classroom and playground), and entails extensive 'culture-work' in learners to develop their multicultural awareness and skills.

It would seem from the above implications that a(n English as a) lingua franca pedagogy would have to account for what we have previously described as 'interculturality' as well as for the discussions and complexities the term engenders.

### **Synopsis of the chapters**

The nine chapters of this book all enrich contemporary understandings of (English as a) lingua franca studies by shedding light on and articulating insights into the interconnections and inter-relationships between interculturality and ELF in ways that previously have been little foregrounded. The volume is divided into three interrelated sections: 1. The Interconnections and Inter-Relationships between Interculturality and ELF; 2. Grounding Conceptual Understandings of Interculturality in ELF Communication; and 3. Commentary. Below we provide brief synopses of each chapter which be read in any order, or by following the thematic structure.

#### *First section*

**Risager's** chapter, 'Lingua francas in a world of migrations', sets the scene for the book by forging the links between interculturality and lingua francas. She discusses the importance of concepts such as linguacultures, linguistic flows and discursive flows as well as their implications for the study of lingua francas. She argues that, as language users transport their language resources for use in new cultural and migratory contexts, these concepts transcend unitary and monolithic understandings of language, culture, and nation. She reminds us that language is not culture-neutral; speakers bring to an encounter their personal linguacultural profile acquired from the language(s) they learned as children, at school, later in life and in different places connected to their lives; such language(s) and language uses are imbued with cultural complexity. Linguacultural and discursive flows are also subjected to hierarchisations, depending on who is speaking, who is listening, and upon the contextual rules and constraints as well as the purposes of the communication. Linguacultures and discursive flows are always 'intercultural', Risager argues, because they are both individual (personal) and collective; the former are shared by others and the latter represent a perspective taken either in response to something else or as an assemblage of various perspectives. She concludes by raising an important question that requires further investigation: 'Are there discourses, topics and areas of knowledge that are preferred or evaded in ELF communication simply because English is the common language – with its specific semantic potentials and constraints' (p. #) or 'because participants do not share the relevant knowledge in some depth?' (p. #).

Chapter 2, by **Fay, Sifakis and Lytra**, 'Interculturalities of English as a Lingua Franca: International Communication and Multicultural Awareness in the Greek context', captures the complexity of the intercultural in ELF as the authors historically chart the development of Englishes in the world. They also offer a conceptualisation and pedagogy of the interculturalities of Englishes as explored within the context of the post-TEFL era of English language education in Greece. They begin by outlining the development of approaches to English language education and pedagogies from the 1950s (e.g. through the work of Larry Smith) and the development of the need for competence (citing Baxter, 1983). They then describe the myriad of ways in which English users can use English in ELF interactions and the interculturalities of Englishes across this varied and complex English language user spectrum. This description highlights how Englishes are fused, shaped, refashioned and reinscribed with other forms of world Englishes, alongside the other languages speakers use and amidst the transnational and local flows of people. These contextual, theoretical and pedagogical concepts offer a complex historical lens for exploring the intercultural in ELF,

hitherto largely undiscussed in current ELF literature (see also O'Regan in this volume). In the second part of the chapter they highlight the need for an intercultural pedagogy in English language teaching in Greece, as multiculturalism and native-speaker English language models for teaching and speaking English begin to be questioned. They propose an approach that consists of multicultural awareness for teaching English (MATE), combined with recognition of international dimensions (as in teaching English as an international Language or TEIL), which introduces cultural awareness and interculturality into English language education pedagogy and foregrounds world Englishes in the context of contemporary multicultural Greece.

Chapter 3, **Baker's** 'Culture and Language in Intercultural Communication, English as a Lingua Franca and English Language Teaching: Points of Convergence and Conflict', focuses on the convergences and conflicts within and across the fields of English as a lingua franca (ELF), applied linguistics research in intercultural communication, and English language teaching (ELT). Baker argues for a conceptualisation of intercultural communicative competence wherein language and culture are viewed as emergent resources in intercultural communication that need to be approached critically. He draws on data from Thailand, where two communicators using ELF (one Thai and one French-speaking Belgian) discuss the game of petanque without reference to binary notions of culture and language. The example serves to illustrate how the relationship between language and culture is contingent and emergent and not 'between' any particular communities. Thus, he argues for more ELF research from a postmodernist perspective that not only illustrates fluid, dynamic and multiple viewpoints in exploring the relationship between language and culture but also explores how interlocutors draw on their knowledge, skills and attitudes during a communication episode. To this end, he believes that ELF researchers who take a postmodernist stance and eschew cultural categories are better able to offer understandings of what is necessary for successful intercultural communication and its related concept of intercultural competence. He refers to Kramsch's (2009) notion of 'symbolic competence', a dynamic, flexible and locally contingent competence, in order to inform his concept of intercultural awareness which recognises the context-specific nature of our communicative practices and that they are temporal and negotiable. He concludes that a critical perspective for understanding intercultural competence through ELF requires further exploration and implementation in both theory and practice.

### *Second section*

Five chapters provide empirically informed discussions to ground their conceptual understandings of interculturality in ELF communication.

In Chapter 4, 'Talking Cultural Identities into Being in ELF interactions: An Investigation of International Postgraduate Students in the United Kingdom', **Jenks** draws on conversational data among international students from three or more nations or regions in the kitchen space of a hall of residence in a UK university. Using conversational analysis and membership categorisation analysis of these students' discussions of their academic and personal issues, Jenks shows how national identity and culture are used as interactional resources to manage talk-based activities in ELF encounters. Jenks' study builds on earlier work that demonstrates how national identities are used as discursive resources and thus highlight the 'complex, collaborative interactional work that is involved in the co-construction of Self and Other' (5). Further, through the three interactional episodes (discussing a supervisor-supervisee relationship, the use of spices in cooking, and food preparatory practices), Jenks' analysis offers a counter to House's (2003) claim that ELF interactions



are culturally neutral (25); he proposes instead that ELF encounters are potentially intercultural encounters.

Like Jenks', **Bjørge's** corpus-based Chapter 5, 'Conflict Talk and ELF Communities of Practice', draws on a discourse analytical perspective to investigate how expressions of unmitigated disagreement (e.g. using direct disagreement responses such as 'no') impacted the negotiations process among ELF users in a business English class. The participants, master's-level students, demonstrated that their national identities did not appear to influence how they approached unmitigated disagreement and thereby negotiated theories of national cultural differences. That is, participants who supposedly came from so-called direct communication cultures (Hall, 1976) did not necessarily use this kind of communication when negotiating disagreement. Indeed, Bjørge found that negotiators did not appear to be disrupted by unmitigated disagreement in their negotiations and continued on with the negotiation process. She suggests that some cultural hybridity may be at play in participants' communicative exchanges, although she does not elaborate because this would require further investigation.

In Chapter Six, 'Intercultural Misunderstanding Revisited: Cultural Difference as a (non) Source of Misunderstanding in ELF Communication', **Kaur** revisits an earlier study that examined the sources and nature of misunderstanding in intercultural communication of international students engaged in ELF communication in a Malaysian higher education context. From her data she discerned no trace of culture-based misunderstanding; instead, misunderstandings appeared to stem from reasons no different from those contributing to misunderstanding in intracultural communication (e.g. mishearing, ambiguity and lack of world knowledge). Her findings, although ELF-focused, have pedagogic implications that highlight the need for understanding how multilingual speakers display linguistic and communicative skills and strategies in both successful and unsuccessful intercultural communication encounters; such skills and strategies are not necessarily grounded in a paradigm of cultural or national difference. Overall, her findings provide evidence to support an alternative approach to intercultural communication – one which accepts understanding, rather than misunderstanding, as the default.

Chapter Seven, **Räisänen's** 'Finnish Engineers' Trajectories of Socialisation into Global Working Life: From Language Learners to BELF Users and the Emergence of a Finnish Way of Speaking English', explores how identity work and processes of 'enregisterment' change among Finnish student engineers who shift their understanding of their English-speaking abilities (linked to their Finnish schooling and the Finnish education system) as they are socialised into new ways of speaking with their German and other international peers during work experience in Germany. Participants discuss their feelings and emotions that emerge during intercultural interactions as they begin to both foreground the relational aspects of intercultural communication and question stereotypes and assumptions about nationalities. Unlike the participants in Bjørge's study, culture and nationality become increasingly important to these students as they make sense of lingua franca interactions and of themselves as users of English. Räisänen concludes that a mere linguistic identity, i.e. that of a language learner or language user, is too narrow for conceptualising identity when ELF is used. Instead, her study suggests that ELF speakers embody different communicative repertoires (Räisänen, 2013) and linguacultural backgrounds (Risager, 2010) and that these repertoires and backgrounds are (re)constructed in intercultural communication. Her research raises further questions about the influence of a stay abroad on identity construction, the intercultural dimensions of identity work, and the processes of acquiring and developing intercultural competence. She suggests that future ELF research should explore whether participants foreground stereotypes or

move beyond 'Us' and 'Them' dichotomies to challenge their own views about culture, as well as how they manage intercultural encounters and how they project a communicator identity (as proposed by Gao, 2014). Echoing Gao (2014), Räisänen notes that individuals' identities can contain variations and combinations for different situations and that these are determined in interactions between the social and the individual.

Chapter Eight, by **Henry**, 'The Local Purposes of a Global Language: English as Intracultural Communicative Medium in China', shifts the focus from intelligibility and the intercultural to indexicality and the intracultural. English use in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang is adopted to demonstrate how ELF can be used among speakers of the same first language (here, Mandarin), not for the purpose of intelligibility but to index and perform cosmopolitan or global identities. For example, Chinese speakers use English with other native speakers of Chinese to express localised discursive concerns such as producing cultural capital, negotiating status, establishing authority and signalling identity. Henry draws on sociolinguistic indexical components, e.g. the way varied forms of referential (demonstratives, pronouns, tenses) and non-referential (accent, stance, style, etc.) content may suggest particular forms of speaker identity, as well as how particular choices about register, style, accent and lexical usage signal to other speakers desirable identities, stances, attitudes and forms of belonging. His ELF research in an intracultural context suggests that the concept of indexicality may have wide application in studies of ELF to illustrate links between cultural frameworks and individual choices. As this study shows, it may also be an arena for intracultural imaginings of, for example, modern or cosmopolitan identities.

### *Third section*

Chapter Nine, Intercultural Communication and the Possibility of English as a Lingua Franca' by **O'Regan**, contains commentary which invites a 'new reading' of ELF. As he reflects upon the positionings and stances of the various contributors to this book, as well as other researchers working under the ELF label, O'Regan challenges the legitimacy of the concept of ELF. He then embarks on a critical analysis (drawing on Marx, Spivak and Derrida) of the concept and its implications for intercultural communication. Following Spivak, he places the concept of ELF under erasure 'so that its provisional and sociolinguistically inadequate nature can be clearly signalled and explored' (p. #). He contests the existence of ELF as a contemporary monolingual construction and instead argues for the term 'lingua franca Englishes' (LFEs):

We may say then that *lingua franca* Englishes when used in intercultural communication encounters are historical, contemporary, personal and often messy, and that the linguistic pragmatics of LFEs are created anew from one context to another, and not according to an *a priori*, emergent or incrementally-evolving plan. (p. #)

Indeed, in his Prolegomena he sets out examples, dating back to the 1600s and the start of the voyages of discovery, of intercultural communication using lingua franca Englishes; these remind readers that the theoretical and empirical foundations of ELF that portray it as a concept which has been in existence since 1995 are erroneous. His analysis, which is both critical and social constructionist in its reference to historicity, situatedness, power and social interaction, alludes to the cultural and contextual features that underpin the positioning of each speaker in intercultural communication encounters.

Adopting a Marxist perspective, O'Regan criticises contemporary ELF research for its focus on global, mostly White, elites (in international business, education, diplomacy, research contexts and tourism/leisure) while ignoring those who are economically deprived, politically oppressed and dispossessed, war ravaged, marginalised and exploited. His new reading invites ELF researchers, teachers and (English) language learners to think of lingua franca Englishes in all their varieties and types, and as used by speakers of Englishes everywhere – irrespective of class, race, gender, economy, religion, geographical location, etc. To this end, he argues for a redistribution of language resources and capital away from these global elites and towards those who are linguistically and economically disadvantaged by ELF in its current state and status.

### **Where to Next? An Agenda for Research into ELF, Lingua Francas and Intercultural Communication**

The rich variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, contexts and pedagogical implications discussed by the researchers in these nine chapters open up a new agenda for ELF in particular, and for lingua franca research and pedagogy more generally as well. The studies prompt several questions. By including interculturality, how can lingua franca research be (re)conceptualised? What critical and interpretive theoretical frameworks allow researchers to explore the complexities of ELF encounters? How can researchers look beyond methodologies in, for example, applied linguistics and ELF, to include intercultural communication and account for the intercultural? How can complex understandings of intercultural identities inform lingua franca communication? How does the context of an interaction (in all its historical, social, religious, economic, etc.) complexity impact lingua franca encounters? How can interculturality, critical intercultural awareness, multicultural awareness (Fay *et al.*'s MATE), ethical communication, etc., be incorporated into lingua franca pedagogies?

Although the chapters in this volume begin to address these questions, much theoretical, methodological and pedagogical work remains to be done to address these questions and others not formulated herein. Despite recent efforts to establish a corpus of ELF communication, e.g. the VOICE corpus at the University of Vienna, and the University of Helsinki's corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA) and corpus of Written English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (WrELFA), the ability to name what ELF communication is, as well as its underlying rules, structure, cultural/intercultural dimensions, etc., remains somewhat elusive. According to the research discussions in these chapters, these goals may be both unlikely and undesirable. To this possibility we might add that recent critiques of the limitations of the theoretical concepts of intercultural competence and intercultural dialogue also open up new lines of investigation towards capabilities (rather than competences) and towards ethical and responsible communication. (For theoretical discussions of these concepts and their development, see for example, Crosbie, 2014; Ferri, 2014; Guilherme, 2010; Holmes, 2015; Phipps, 2014. For pedagogical examples, see for example Porto, 2014; and Santos, Araújo e Sá & Simões, 2014).

The Marxist critique offered by O'Regan, and the various approaches and outcomes highlighted in this volume, point strongly to the limitations of much contemporary ELF research. O'Regan offers a jarring reminder that we should be ever vigilant of the dangers of words – in their rigidity, sedimentation and fashion. These terms which underpin much of our theoretical, methodological and pedagogical discussions of intercultural communication and applied linguistics – 'English', 'culture', 'ELF' (under erasure, crossed out) – appear with uncertainty, contradiction, inconsistency and incongruity. The challenge, then, for researchers and teachers, is perhaps not to

seek solid, stable answers, but to continue to question and investigate in order to appreciate and understand the uniqueness of human interaction in whatever lingua franca encounters.

In closing, we prioritise a research agenda that adopts a broader exploration of the role lingua francas play in intercultural encounters, not just among global elites and those economically advantaged (to refer again to what Tawona Sithole calls a ‘good English’ and all its entrapments, which are well illustrated by the ‘good English’ of Christine Lagarde in O’Regan’s chapter). Instead, we suggest the examination of lingua franca experience among people in the majority of the world – that is, the poor, the oppressed, and those disadvantaged, disenfranchised and disowned through wars, religious oppression and persecution, and economic transformations inflicted upon them by global, powerful and privileged elites in the developed world. We particularly wish to promote such examination among those people who, for whatever reasons, constitute and contribute to the transnational, linguacultural, migratory flows of people across borders and who (re)construct new linguacultures and communities. Currently, much of the research published in the name of ELF ignores and erases from discussion such other speakers of English as a lingua franca.

Further, a focus on borders and border crossings (whether geographical or metaphorical) – as places where people congregate and exchange, enact, (re)construct and (re)negotiate linguistic and cultural forms, practices and identities – offers rich opportunities for understanding the importance of lingua franca communication beyond ELF as well as the interculturality it entails (see for example, the AHRC project “Researching multilingually at the borders of languages, the body, law and the state” <http://researching-multilingually-at-borders.com/>).<sup>2</sup> These works in progress illustrate that lingua francas are characterised and shaped by complex cultural, social, economic, political, religious, historical, etc. forces. These research agendas, and others like them, along with the chapters in this volume, challenge the limitations of extant ELF research and open up new possibilities that necessitate a variety of theoretical, methodological and ontological research approaches and tools – those which also prioritise the concept of interculturality entailed in such encounters. We hope that this volume will be the first of many to come, and that it will allow scholars and practitioners – and others – involved in researching and teaching about ELF and interculturality to come together, enter into dialogue and break away from the orthodoxies described in this introduction and the chapters.

## Notes

- (1) ‘A belief or a way of thinking that is accepted as true or correct’ (Online Merriam-Webster).
- (2) See also the linguistic complexity at play within established communities whose linguistic spaces are constantly under (re)construction (see for example, Blommaert, 2013; and the current AHRC project “Translation and translanguaging: Investigating linguistic and cultural transformations in superdiverse wards in four UK cities”, <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/index.aspx>)

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